

CLAIMS

What is claimed:

1. A method of removing residual stain from a surface to which a stain has been applied, the method comprising suctioning residual stain from the surface.

5

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising collecting the residual stain suctioned from the surface in a reservoir.

10 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising reapplying at least a portion of the stain collected in the reservoir to a surface.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising using a flow from the suctioning to apply stain to a surface.

15 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising attenuating sound produced by the suctioning.

20 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the suctioning comprises positioning an end portion of at least one hose adjacent the residual stain, the hose having another end portion in communication with a source of low pressure to establish suction within the hose towards the source of low pressure.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the positioning comprises positioning a tip coupled to the end portion of the hose adjacent the residual stain.

25

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising coupling a corresponding one of a plurality of tips to the end portion of the hose.

30 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising filtering a flow from the suctioning.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the suctioning comprises suctioning at a flow rate between about one cubic foot per minute and three cubic feet per minute.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the suctioning occurs relatively
5 immediately after the stain has been applied to the surface.

12. A method of staining a surface, the method comprising: applying stain to the surface, suctioning residual stain from the surface, and collecting the residual stain suctioned from the surface in a reservoir.

5 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the applying stain to a surface includes reapplying at least a portion of the stain collected in the reservoir to the surface.

10 14. The method of claim 12, wherein the applying stain to a surface includes utilizing a flow from the suctioning.

15. Apparatus for removing residual stain from a surface to which stain has been applied, the apparatus comprising an inlet chamber connected to a nozzle, an outlet chamber adapted for connection to a source of low pressure to establish a flow through the apparatus, into the inlet chamber and out the outlet chamber, and a 5 reservoir for trapping stain entrained in the flow through the apparatus.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the source of low pressure includes a pump driven by a motor, and wherein the flow is isolated from the motor.

10 17. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the source of low pressure comprises a vacuum generator, and wherein the apparatus further comprises a muffler in communication with the vacuum generator to receive exhaust from the vacuum generator.

15 18. The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising at least one hose having an end portion in communication with the inlet chamber such that low pressure within the inlet chamber creates suction within the hose towards the source of low pressure; and a plurality of interchangeable tips each of which is adapted to be removably coupled to another end portion of the hose.

20 19. The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising a plurality of tip holders each adapted to receive a corresponding one of the tips.

25 20. The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a filter disposed between the inlet chamber and the outlet chamber to filter particulates received into the inlet chamber from the flow before the flow exits the outlet chamber.

21. The apparatus of claim 15, further including a drain for removing stain from the reservoir.

22. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the reservoir includes a removable portion.
23. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the apparatus is adapted to be
5 operable at a flow rate between about one cubic foot per minute and three cubic feet per minute.

24. Apparatus for removing residual stain from a surface to which a stain has been applied, the apparatus comprising means for suctioning residual stain from the surface; and means for collecting the residual stain suctioned from the surface.
- 5 25. The apparatus of claim 24, further comprising means for using a flow from the suctioning to apply stain to a surface.

26. Apparatus for removing residual stain from a surface to which stain has been applied, the apparatus comprising an inlet chamber connected to a nozzle, an outlet chamber adapted for connection to a pump driven by a motor to establish a flow, isolated from the motor, through the apparatus, into the inlet chamber and out 5 the outlet chamber, a reservoir for trapping stain entrained in the flow through the apparatus and including at least one of a removable portion and a drain, and a filter disposed between the inlet chamber and the outlet chamber to filter particulates received into the inlet chamber from the flow before the flow exits the outlet chamber and before the stain is removed from the reservoir by the drain.

10

27. The apparatus of claim 26, further comprising at least one hose having an end portion in communication with the inlet chamber such that low pressure within the inlet chamber creates suction within the hose towards the inlet chamber, and a plurality of interchangeable tips each adapted to be removably coupled to 15 another end portion of the hose.

28. Apparatus for removing residual stain from a surface to which stain has been applied, the apparatus comprising an inlet chamber connected to a nozzle, an outlet chamber adapted for connection to a venturi vacuum generator to establish a flow through the apparatus, into the inlet chamber and out the outlet chamber, a 5 reservoir for trapping stain entrained in the flow through the apparatus and including at least one of a removable portion and a drain, and a filter disposed between the inlet chamber and the outlet chamber to filter particulates received into the inlet chamber from the flow before the flow exits the outlet chamber and before the stain is removed from the reservoir by the drain.

10

29. The apparatus of claim 28, further comprising at least one hose having an end portion in communication with the inlet chamber such that low pressure within the inlet chamber creates suction within the hose towards the inlet chamber, and a plurality of interchangeable tips each adapted to be removably coupled to 15 another end portion of the hose.